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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





A. R. Apofford
Comptroller
R. D. Mussey
"RESPONSE."

"The Loyal Women of 1861-'65."

Response to the last Regular Toast at the Army
of the Cumberland Banquet, in the Music Hall,
Cincinnati, October 25, 1883,

27
BY
GENERAL R. D. MUSSEY.



Mr. Chairman and Comrades:

I am embarrassed by this Toast. Shall the response be as if the speaker were the representative of the Army of the Cumberland telling what we think of the Loyal Women who during the Rebellion added jewels to the crown of Womanhood? Or shall the speaker give voice to their appreciation of your thanks, your gratitude, your honor, your devotion and your love? Which shall it be?

In ignorance of your intention let me construe the toast for myself and put my own interpretation on your desires. Let me, so far as I may, unite the two and say what, on this occasion and after these years, seems fittest to express the memory we have of the Loyal Women of 1861 and the largess of the love they gave us.

The War of the Rebellion was not a mere incident in our

Nation's life; it was an epoch in History. Not only did it "preserve us a Nation" but it enlarged the horizon of humanity. Specially is this true as to those who took part in it. No man that bore a musket—no man that wore a sword—no man that sighted a gun—no man that unfurled a sail—in that War, but became a broader, fuller, larger, riper man. The area of his life was magnified by the grandeur of the struggle in which he was engaged. The vastness of its proportions ennobled him. "His spirit grew with its allotted place." No change of time or circumstance can ever reduce him to his former self. His growth may be arrested and the promise of further increase bear no fruit. But still a positive, appreciable, and irreversible progress has been made. So it is with us who survive; and we cannot doubt that they, whom shell and shot and disease took from our ranks, entered the spiritual world with capacity for more extended vision than they possessed when the war began.

Now, Mr. Chairman and Comrades, this effect was not confined to the Men who were loyal from 1861 to 1865: it extended to those whom you have toasted—the Loyal Women of The War—enlarged their horizon; gave them new perceptions of duty; new views of life; new ideas of country. It opened new avenues of activity; new fields of for study; new resources of livelihood; and new opportunities for achievement. A nobler manhood and a fairer womanhood are possible to day—nay, exist and surround us by reason of that War! Am I not right in saying that the War emancipated Man and Woman—without distinction of race, color, or previous condition—fitting them to possess a new World and cultivate it? It is not necessary to enumerate these changes as they affect Woman. Here in this *Queen City* of the West, whose very name attests womanly supremacy, every step shows what Woman has dared and what Woman has done since the War. Even yonder organ is as beautiful without as it is strong voiced and melodious within because of the touch of woman's

hand.* In Art, in Literature, in the Professions, in Business, there are to-day thousands of women honored, honorable and useful, who but for the War would never have been there.

The War taught us that neither Man alone nor Woman alone can hope for the highest success. Womanly wit must aid Manly wisdom; Manly effort must execute Womanly instinct, and Womanly grace must crown Manly strength, before the perfect deed is done. Just in proportion as the two great elemental forces of the Universe, that find their representation respectively in Man and Woman, are united in harmonious cooperation—just in that proportion is the waste of Nature made habitable and populated.

So much, as their representative have I said for the Loyal Women in acknowledgment of the effects of the War which we fought.

But, who can speak our debt to them?

The Loyal Women at home whom we left! Whose hope was always bright! Whose faith never faltered! Whose charity never failed! Whose self-sacrifice never ceased! Whose love knew no abatement! How their handiwork cheered us! How their counsel restrained us! How their courage strengthened us! How their prayers aided us! How their affection rewarded us!

Every message of love they sent us was sanctified by the spirit of that grand couplet—

“I could not love the dear so much
Loved I not honor more.”

The Loyal Women, too, from home, who went with us! Whose gentle patience soothed the pain of wounds, ministered to the fevered fancy of disease, and sustained the pillow of the dying! Well might that poor boy in Hospital say in homely but expressive phrase to one fortunately still

* The case of the Organ in the Music Hall, where the Banquet was held, is ornamented with carving by Ladies of Cincinnati.

spared to us—"Miss you are the God blessedest woman I ever saw!"

The Loyal Women, too, whom we met down there! When the real history of the War is written—if it ever is—the world will know its indebtedness to them. Our President, (Gen'l SHERIDAN) could tell what sure knowledge of his opponents "in the Valley" he got from that little lady whom we know in Washington. General GRANT could tell how he tightened his grip upon the throat of Richmond because of the information sent him by the lady whom a later President turned out of the Post Office which he had secured for her.

There is not one of you that commanded Armies, Corps, Divisions, Brigades or Regiments—that would not have his contribution to make to the Story of Loyal Women at the South giving him the material of facts upon which to plan and execute movements and avert surprises. There isn't one of us, Comrades, but has some reminiscence of help or encouragement from these Loyal Women of the South. Perhaps there are some here to-night beside myself, who can remember how we were thrilled by the sight of those patriotic Women who walked ten miles across the Cumberland Mountains into DUNLAP just to see the "Old Flag" once more. Just to see it, mind you! They were not begging for rations nor seeking passes.

Until Heroism becomes a lost Art, and Patriotism is forgot, BARBARA FRETCHIE shall wave her flag and conquer STONEWALL JACKSON and his Corps! What is called "historical criticism" is trying to prove it all away. If it succeed in robbing our brothers of the Eastern Armies of that precious and poetic memory of their campaigns, it cannot deprive us, of the Army of the Cumberland, of Mrs. HETTY McEWEN of Nashville, who nailed the Flag to the roof that covered the head of her dying Son—though the whole City was in arms against it—quietly saying—

"My Son was born under that Flag, and he shall die under it." And he did!

Then there were other Loyal Women that we met there. Black, brown, and colored—many of them uncouth of feature; devoid of grace; ignorant and humble. Yet who of you that fled from Salisbury, or Andersonville, or Libby, but blessed God when he saw one then, and shared her “pone,” was hid by her in the bushes, or guided by her through trackless swamps, and over barren mountains on his way to Freedom! We should be recreant if, under this toast, we did not gratefully pledge their memory!

Mr. Chairman, your Toast embarrasses me. It is too broad and too narrow.

Too broad, for it demands more than can be rendered to do justice to the Loyal Women from 1861 to 1865. It was too much to ask me last year to speak for the two and three-fourths millions of men who carried the Flag from 1861 to 1865. But to-night you ask me to speak for those who followed its every move as it went from the Ohio and the Potomac to the Gulf, and from the Pacific to the Atlantic—with earnest tears and prayers with hope and fear, with joy and grief! Three times their number who carried it were they, for each man that went left behind a mother, a sister, and a wife or a sweetheart among the Loyal Women of the North.

Your Toast is too narrow, for it makes no mention of those Loyal Women of 1831 to 1835 and 1841 to 1845 without whom there would have been no Loyal Men in 1861 and 1865. Certainly, we and the Country, have reason to be grateful to them that they were wise enough to have the right sort of sons ready when they were needed! Your toast is too narrow now

—“that noble thought is freer under the sun
And the heart of the people beats with one desire,”—

that it does not permit me to speak of the devotion, the sacrifice, the courage, the perseverance, the energy shown by those Women who were loyal to the other side. Their horizon was enlarged too. They who suffered defeat in 1865

are now, in 1883, with a zeal to which I bear tribute of fullest praise, seeking to repair their losses, and are busy rehabilitating the Southern States, not as independent Sovereignties, but as integral portions of the Union in which they and their antagonists of twenty years ago are to-day American Women. The great Present born of the Splendid Past presages a greater Future. A "more perfect Union" is assured for the American Man and the American Woman.

The American Woman is no doll, no plaything. She is a help meet for the American Man.

Wandering sometimes through the Halls of Statuary, in the Corcoran Gallery, I look at the attempts made by Sculptors, ancient and modern, to embody their ideals of Woman.

Their Dianas, their Aprodites, their Minervas do not satisfy me. I turn from them to a Statue, battered and bruised and mutilated as by War, and in the so-called Venus of Milo I see a nearer fulfillment of what the American Woman is and shall be.

She is no mere

—"lovely apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament;"—

but,

"A perfect woman nobly planned
To Warn, to Comfort and Command."

She is the daughter of a Patriot, the Sister of a Hero, the Wife of a Sovereign, and the Mother of the American citizen.

Happy, thrice happy he who can clasp her hand and say

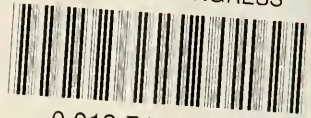
"My bride
My wife, my life! O, we will walk this world
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows."







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